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Washington State Senate

Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles

36th Legislative District

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October 2, 2009

WA State Building Code Council
128 10th Ave SW
P.O. Box 42525
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Dear State Building Code Council Members,

It is my understanding that the Council is taking comments on the adoption of the proposed building code rule changes for 2009. In accordance with S.S.B. 5561, the Council has proposed amending Section 907 of the Fire and International Building Codes and Section R315 in the Residential Code to require carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in dwellings.

I noticed that your proposed regulations do not require CO alarms for most of the dwellings until 2013. As the Chair of the Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection Committee in which S.S.B. 5561 originated, I would like to remind the Council that the date of 2013 for implementation of CO alarms was intended to serve as a *maximum* date, not a required date.

Given the timely development of the proposed regulations, and the fact that 22 other states have been able to implement the CO requirement promptly, I would recommend that Council require this life saving technology in existing dwellings sooner than the proposed date of 2013. While I understand that there is some procedural unease regarding speeding up the implementation date for owner-occupied homes, I have heard of no similar concern with implementing alarms in non owner-occupied dwellings. At a minimum, I would request that the Council consider speeding up the implementation for the non-owner occupied dwellings.

The risk to Washington citizens and those traveling through our state is too high. Researchers from the LDS Hospital Hyperbaric Medicine Department found that between 1989 and 2004, 711 hotel, motel, and resort guests were accidentally poisoned by CO. According to Lindell K. Weaver, MD, medical director of the LDS Hospital Hyperbaric Medicine Center and Professor at the University of Utah School of Medicine, "The number of reported incidents of poisoning per year has not decreased over this 15-year interval... This risk could approach zero with effective CO prevention measures." Expediting the implementation date would decrease the number of accidental deaths and emergency

room visits, as CO accounts for 20,000 visits per year. There is no reason to wait another three years before our state addresses the threat of CO poisoning.

Thank you for your consideration of my request and for your work on such an important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanne Kohl-Welles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles
36th Legislative District